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great that for a boy to make out the meaning of a simple Latin passage, and still more to write even the shabbiest bit of Latin prose, requires something beyond mere memory and imitation, demanding as it does a real active and originaive mental effort. The learner can not remain wholly passive or receptive. He must do or contribute something of his own, and it is in encouraging this habit, in developing latent power into living energy, that the secret of true education lies. The positive results immediately secured often appear poor, but the process itself is of the highest value, and those who sneer at it as 'mental gymnastics' forget that it is as necessary to mental health as exercise is to physical, while when they proceed to deride the Classics as 'dead' languages they do plain violence to fact. For who can say that Greek and Latin are in any true sense dead? In literature and art, in science and philosophy, in all that concerns law, social order, and the principles of government, we are connected in an unbroken and living union with Greece and Rome. Their history is an organic part of our own, their words breathe on our lips, their thoughts are wrought into the tissue of our intellectual being, and the public schools, ever since their foundation, have wisely maintained the principle that learning can not be separated from its source; nor is their record as makers of men so poor that they need timorously put aside this good tradition in obedience to popular clamor".

Mr. Page concludes with an earnest plea to the masters of the great English schools to cast about for a remedy of the situation which he has described (in much too somber terms, at times, we think). Amid all the changed conditions of modern education there is yet room, he holds, much room, for classical studies; the problem of the schools is to determine how they shall keep that place for the Classics. "Possibly they may still continue to ignore it and, either through indolent neglect or the preoccupation of sordid cares, allow a study which is their oldest heritage slowly to decline and disappear. But if they do so, if they forget alike their traditions and responsibilities, they will incur the charge not merely of being false to their own honor, but of having betrayed the true interests of liberal education. For assuredly no form of education can justly be called 'liberal' in which the study of science and preparation for active life are not associated as their necessary complement with that study of polite letters to which classical learning is certainly the best, and possibly the indispensable foundation".

This brief outline of Mr. Page's paper suggests certain comments, which, however, lack of space makes it necessary to postpone to the next issue of *The Classical Weekly*.

C. K.

### THE VOCABULARY OF HIGH SCHOOL LATIN

The last thirty years have been remarkable for the attention paid to every detail of Latin teaching in the secondary school. The system in vogue before that time had come down by tradition from the Middle Ages and had inevitably all the faults that would naturally belong to a system devised for an entirely different purpose from that for which we teach Latin at the present time. Latin during the Middle Ages and afterwards offered a universal means of communication, and for that reason training in the practical use of the Latin tongue was a part of the education of every cultivated person.

Nowadays, the chief function of Latin study, apart from mental gymnastic and the instruction in general grammar that it involves, is to acquaint the student with the masterpieces of the literature of Rome; to bring him face to face with those authors whose works have been for ages one of the chief foundations of culture. It is evident, therefore, that the object of the study of Latin nowadays is quite different from, almost opposite to that of former generations. At the same time, in recent years, the curriculum of the secondary school has been revolutionized, all the branches of modern knowledge have clamored for recognition, and inasmuch as in the earlier period Greek, Latin and Mathematics constituted practically the whole curriculum, it was inevitable that the introduction of modern literature and science into the school curriculum could only be accomplished by restricting the time given to the Classics. So far as Greek is concerned, this change has been entirely destructive and for all practical purposes Greek has become merely an ornamental or extra study in the high school. Latin has fared much better than Greek, and is still a very necessary element in secondary education; but it has come to occupy a very restricted place in the curriculum, while the object and method of its teaching have been radically changed. The discussions of this modern period have not failed to include the question of the organization of the whole high school curriculum in Latin as well as the best methods of teaching, but so far as the substance of the curriculum is concerned there has been, however, not a great change. At present, the high school curriculum is usually one of four years, the first of which is occupied by a beginner's book and the other three by Caesar, Cicero and Vergil respectively. This scheme is partly traditional, partly evolutionary, but, unlike some other matters of tradition, it has been demonstrated by actual experience as well as by investigation to be based upon very sound principles. Only one part of it has been at all seriously modified, and that is the first year, devoted, as I have said, to the beginner's book. In the case of the

other three years, the author himself has been stable and the main lines of teaching have not been seriously disturbed. But, in connection with the first year the differences of opinion as to the best method of instruction have been legion, and almost every teacher, it would seem, has felt it incumbent upon himself to set before the world his ideas in the form of a beginner's book. Even now this flood of beginner's books does not seem to lessen; during the last year three or four were put upon the market. Such a condition is a healthful sign because it shows that the minds of many teachers have been intent upon the best methods of accomplishing the most important part of Latin instruction, namely, the first year work.

Without going into a detailed discussion of the elements of the first year book, we may say that one particular characteristic of almost all recent books stands out clearly; that is the kind of vocabulary employed. In the old books, when teachers were training the child for the practical use of Latin, the vocabulary of the beginner's book was not merely very extensive but contained a large number of words—perhaps the majority of them—which belonged to the ordinary pursuits of life, names of animals, of birds, of the implements of everyday existence. But, with our new intention in teaching, it seemed unwise to insist upon pupils learning in the first year a vocabulary which would be, so far as their later study was concerned, practically useless. The wide-awake teacher, therefore, concluded that it was essential that the beginner's book should contain a vocabulary that would lead immediately to a pupil's first reading and would be available, further, for his subsequent study. Now, as I have said, the first extensive Latin reading has been Caesar, and Caesar is going to remain the first extensive reading for very good reasons. If we were asked to lay down *a priori* the necessary requirements for a good Latin reading book, we should say, probably, that it should be, in the first place, narrative; that, in the second place, its vocabulary should be concrete; and that, in the third place, the range of the vocabulary should be narrow. All these requirements are met in a very great measure by Caesar, in fact, in much greater measure than by any other Latin author. His Commentaries are narrative, they are written in language that is remarkably concrete, and the range of the vocabulary is remarkably narrow; and further than this, this vocabulary, narrow as it is, is composed of words which occur for the most part over and over again in the literature with which the pupil will come in contact later. It is this characteristic of the Caesarian vocabulary which explains the failure of any substitute for Caesar that has been brought before the public. It explains why, in spite of apparent

advantages, Nepos is very much less available for the first extended Latin reading, and why such authors as Eutropius, Curtius and the like have never attained any genuine hold.

In view of this position of Caesar in the curriculum, almost all the modern beginner's books in Latin limit their vocabulary to the words in most common use in Caesar; that is, so far as this is possible. Of course some allowance must be made for the difficulty of getting Latin sentences which will actually make sense, when the vocabulary is so restricted, and in practice these books all contain a few words which do not follow their principle of selection. But these are very few.

If we examine the curriculum of the secondary school a little further, we shall find that the habit of following Caesar by Cicero is also based upon very sound considerations. Cicero's vocabulary is also, in the six speeches usually read, but little more extensive than Caesar's. It likewise employs much the same vocabulary as Caesar; the difference lies particularly in the style, because Cicero's speeches are not narrative but forensic Latin, and the element of the imagination or the ideal enters largely. The concrete quality of the vocabulary is, however, still very evident. It is remarkable how little is the absolute addition to a pupil's word-list gained from reading Cicero after Caesar, but it is also just as remarkable how much wider range the student has gained from this reading in handling the words he knows. It is almost a commonplace that Cicero is usually easy after the pupil gets acquainted with the difference of style. This is readily explained from the similarity of the vocabulary employed to that of Caesar. But it is equally certain that the ordinary pupil gets in Cicero his first sense of being able actually to read Latin, and his first feeling for the possibilities of the language as a means for the expression of thought.

The last year of the high school is filled by the first six books of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Here the pupil comes for the first time into contact with the possibilities of the Latin language in the way of word coinage and figurative usage. Vergil's vocabulary is very much larger than that of Caesar or Cicero, and contains a very much greater proportion of words which occur either once only or very rarely.

The capacity of pupils in the high school has also been the subject of considerable thought and study; and it has been demonstrated by actual experience that the ordinary high school pupil can not be expected to acquire in his first year of Latin study a vocabulary that contains much more than 500 words. This does not mean that the vocabulary of the first year book should be restricted to that number, but it does mean that if any definite requirement is made, a pupil should not be expected to fix in his

memory more than that number. And, as a matter of fact, almost all the beginner's Latin books of the present day make it a reason for congratulation that their vocabulary is small (rarely exceeding 500 words), that it is made up of the words that occur most frequently in Caesar, and that, consequently, no time is lost by a pupil in passing from the beginner's book to the reading of Caesar.

This peculiarity of our beginner's books as well as certain others that are in the line of simplification and exclusion are unquestionably based on sound reasoning. Under the pressure of work in our schools it seems unwise—even absurd—to attempt to load a pupil's mind with information that will be of no service to him. Consequently, it seems almost axiomatic that lists of exceptions, lists of unusual words, study of unusual phenomena of syntax should be left out of the first year; and it also seems axiomatic that the words employed should be small in number and the vocabulary restricted in scope.

But, while this has been granted everywhere with regard to the first year book, very little attention has been paid to similar considerations with reference to the work of the other three years. And yet it would seem that if our first year's training is essentially sound, the trouble, if there is trouble, must lie in the teaching of the other years. Let us see if this is so. We hear everywhere the statement made that the training in Latin in our high schools and colleges does not provide a student with the means of reading Latin, and it is a common complaint of our teachers in colleges that pupils come up from the high school to college inadequately prepared, even though they have succeeded in passing their entrance examinations.

Now, these two criticisms belong together and are both, as it seems to me, based upon the faulty entrance requirements laid down by our colleges. For it must be understood that high school teachers, even with the very best intentions, are hemmed in and limited in their teaching by College Entrance Requirements. Our usual demands for college entrance are: that a pupil shall be able to translate certain selections from Caesar, Cicero and Vergil which he has already read in school; that he shall be able to translate some simple English into some equally simple Latin; and that—but this is not a universal requirement—he shall make an attempt at translating some Latin never seen before into English. The main burden rests upon the translation of passages already read. Now, such a requirement in the case of a modern language would, at the present time, be received with amusement, if not with a sneer; but in the case of Latin it is received with the utmost seriousness and defended with even greater seriousness. Latin is not a modern language, we are told, but a dead one. We can not

therefore expect to set the same kind of an examination as we would in a modern language. We wish to test our pupils' knowledge of Latin, to be sure, but they can not be expected to translate at sight at this stage of their study; and when we do set passages for sight translation we have to make so many allowances that it ceases to be a genuine test.

But is not this begging the whole question? As a matter of fact we *do* demand sight translation of every candidate; and moreover sight translation when the possibilities of success are much more limited than in rendering unseen Latin into English. I mean the rendering of English into Latin. Experience teaches us that it is much more difficult to render *into* a foreign language than to render *from* a foreign language, and yet we *do* require our unfortunate candidates to translate at sight passages from English into Latin, but allow them to translate from Latin into English passages already read. No one would be willing for an instant to set before a candidate an exercise from English into Latin that he had already written, and yet that is what has been done with the very much easier matter of translating from Latin into English. This certainly does seem absurd on the face of it, and the more one reflects upon it the more absurd does it become.

If pupils are expected to read Latin with a certain degree of fluency—and this is not an unreasonable expectation—sight translation should be made a definite object of instruction from the beginning of their work. But, to read Latin at sight several things are necessary: first, a knowledge of forms; secondly, a knowledge of the fundamental principles of syntax; thirdly, a good-sized vocabulary; fourthly, training in the art of translation. With regard to the first two requirements, there is unanimity of opinion. Everybody agrees that form and syntax are essential. With regard to the fourth requirement, there is also considerable agreement; but with regard to the third there is not so much a disagreement of opinion as a certain vagueness of thinking. We are informed by some that vocabulary is best learned by continual reading, continual thumbing of the lexicon, and that it is pedagogically unsound to demand of a pupil that he commit to memory lists of words. It is also further emphasized that a knowledge of vocabulary comes best from repeated use of the words already learned. With the last statement I agree, and I am in some sympathy with the objection to the committing to memory of lists of words; but the chief fault lies in the first statement: continual reading will only produce a knowledge of vocabulary if either the words occur time and again or if some definite attempt is made to fix the attention upon word meaning as the reading progresses.

If a certain definite vocabulary of 500 words is of value in the beginner's year, it is certainly of just as much value that in the second year the requirement for vocabulary should be definite and that a teacher should be able, at any time during the year, to know how far in word learning a class has progressed and how much still remains to be done in the year's work. The words that are acquired during this second year should also be of such a nature that they will be available for subsequent reading, and the same thing is clear with regard to the third and fourth years.

(To be concluded)

GONZALEZ LODGE

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

### CORRESPONDENCE

The editorial in the issue of October 26 (Number 4) has called forth the following letters:

I

It may be interesting to hear the word of another parent concerning the use of translations. Several years ago I was preparing a boy in Greek and Latin for an Eastern college. His father, a man of great integrity, came to me and complained that I was making the work too difficult, that I was trying to give the boy a preparation that his future career in college did not necessitate. He said, "I went through my college course never using a translation, but *I shall never ask my son to do the same*". Is the problem in college different from that in the secondary school?

It is to be feared that the argument based on an abstract advantage, loss of child's time or parent's money, will not, after the first Monday in September, be very clinching for the average child. That hard work in the long run will bring the best results may be admitted, but with the exertion mental and the reward vague, the run is too long even for good High School athletes. The boy is often deplorably modern and mature in his commercial spirit. A lad to whom I talked about the use of translations said, "But John spends only half as much time on the preparation of his lessons as I do, and he makes a better showing and gets a better mark". The fault is obviously with the methods of John's instructor. Unless the teacher is keen enough to see, and resourceful enough to meet the situation in a way satisfactory to the pupils, the better showing and better mark will be too tempting; and shoddy preparation will be practiced by many pupils and upheld by many parents.

It would be interesting to know whether the boys mentioned in the Weekly of Oct. 26, who seemed to think it was right to use translations and would fain convince their mother, had tried to strengthen their own belief and arguments by a

frank talk on the subject with their instructors. Unfortunate features of the practice are the underhand way in which John uses the book, his shifting concessions made to convince himself, and perhaps his mother, that it is "all right", and the flippant amusement attendant upon discovery.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN.

ANNA S. JONES

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May I be allowed to say a few words in regard to the use of translations from the point of view of a student?

I passed through my High School and my Normal School course under the impression that the use of translations was on a par with cheating at cards—reserved for cads only. When I came East to attend a prominent woman's college, I found a large proportion of the students using translations, and my opinion regarded as a silly or ignorant prejudice. I decided to try to get the opinion of the professor of Latin. I explained to him my previous idea, and was told that it was an extreme view, that as long as students got their lessons it was really no business of his how they did it; personally he thought the use of translations unwise but unquestionably they were useful under certain conditions. Just what these conditions were I was unable to find out.

For my part translations for Latin were, fortunately, unnecessary, but with Greek it was different. I was badly prepared and the pressure of work was in my case peculiarly heavy. If there was nothing to prevent my use of translations except the "unwisdom of it", it seemed folly to spend an hour on what I could do in ten minutes. I was too inexperienced to know the nature of the harm I was doing my work, and as there was no stress upon any but prepared work, both in class-room and examination, I was not brought to any realization of the nature of the mischief until, after an interregnum of some years, I took up the study of Greek again. I literally knew little more than my alphabet.

A recent graduate of a church college told me quite frankly that he could not have prepared his Latin and Greek without using translations. The college in question is one whose chief function is to prepare men for the ministry. It would be interesting to know just what the instructors in that college are in the habit of saying to their students on this subject.

My experience as a substitute teacher in New York showed me that a very large proportion of the students habitually used translations. I was not able to learn of any action having been taken in the matter, except a tendency to make examinations in translation largely sight work.

Personally I am of the opinion that the remedy lies in the hands of the colleges. When entrance